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PREVENTION * LAW ENFORCEMENT * RESEARCH

Maine Fire Marshal News

Maine State Fire Marshal's Office • Fire Research
Maine Department of Public Safety

March 2012

Spring 2012 Vol. 3, Issue No. 1

WELCOME!

Welcome to this issue of the *Maine Fire Marshal News*. Yes, we skipped an edition because we've been so busy. We'll get to some of that later in this edition. Please take some time to read the newsletter and send us your own article for a future publication or comments in general. As always, we do appreciate the feedback on the newsletter many of you have sent over the years and look forward to hearing from you more in the future. Because this newsletter was delayed I'm going to give you the last message of former Fire Marshal, John C. Dean as it was written back in January.



A MESSAGE FROM FORMER FIRE MARSHAL JOHN C. DEAN

This will be my last message as I will be retiring at the end January. The last 14+ years have been an amazing experience. I have had the privilege of working with some of the most capable, dedicated, and just plain nice people I have ever met.

In this issue...

<i>A Message from Former Fire Marshal John Dean</i>	1-2
<i>Governor Proclaims Sept. Campus Fire Safety Month</i>	2
<i>MEFIRS Report</i>	3
<i>Rich McCarthy: New Assistant Fire Marshal</i>	4
<i>Hurricane Irene</i>	4 -5
<i>Maine Fire Watch</i>	5
<i>Maine Fire Marshals Investigation</i>	6
<i>This Month in Fire History</i>	8
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	9

I have learned the value of surrounding myself with folks who are a good blend of talents that complement each other. When I think about what we have done to make Maine a safer place, I think of the plans examiners who make sure that facilities used by the public are designed with safety in mind. I think about the inspectors who spend countless hours conducting thousands of inspections to make sure that the facilities we regulate are safe, including hospitals and nursing homes where some of our most vulnerable people are housed. I think about the investigators who respond day and night to dig out fire scenes in their quest to find the truth. They hear stories of grief and losses and a few lies mixed in. I think about the support staff who answer the phones, handle all of the paperwork and records without whose help none of the other work would matter.

I also think about how important aggressive, focused investigations and prosecutions are in deterring crime. With all of our investigators having to qualify as expert witnesses, you can bet that they know their business and the bad guys are at a definite disadvantage. I think about how our relatives, friends, and people we don't even know will benefit from how we have made Maine safer for generations into the future.

While some characterize government regulations as anti-business, I believe that our regulations are very much pro-business. Our regulations are business friendly because the

regulations keep the businesses from having losses. They keep the businesses from burning down and the fires from injuring or killing workers and/or customers. Any responsible business person would call that business friendly. Only a "slum lord" who only wishes to suck the profits from a business and who has no regard for his property , workers, or customers, would call our regulations anti-business.

And we have evidence that good regulations (there are bad ones) work. Training, inspections, and safety minded managers, administrators, and workers, have resulted in no fire deaths in the facilities we regulate and inspect since 1945. There are few states that can make that claim. We have actually had fires in hospitals and nursing homes, but because we require the facilities to be built correctly, that detection, annunciation, and suppression system be installed, coupled with well-trained caregivers, we have had no deaths.

I am grateful for the cooperative working relationship our office has had with all of the other bureaus in the Department of Public Safety, and with all of our public safety partners in fire departments and law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

So, as I leave this position, I urge you all to stay dedicated, stay safe, and support each other.

Sincerely,



John C. Dean
Fire Marshal



SERVICE TO HIS COUNTRY, STATE, & HOME TOWN

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

John C. Dean returned from the Viet Nam war with a Bronze Star and other military commendations. The Viet Nam war was one of the most socially and politically straining, extremely violent, events in American history. Perhaps his direct experience in this complex struggle and having lived during this tumultuous time prepared him for a career, and a laudable one at that, in the often politically charged and diverse arena of the American fire service.

Following his military service John Dean began his fire service career in Old Town. Starting out as a firefighter he worked his way up through the ranks to Deputy Fire Chief. While working for Old Town he also managed information systems for the Fire Training and Education school in Bangor in addition to providing risk analysis and technical services to the insurance industry. It was in 1989 that Fire Marshal Dean took his first command as Fire Chief at the popular beachside community of Wells, Maine. In Wells, Chief Dean would become well acquainted with all aspects of operating a fire department in addition to working with leaders from the various municipal departments and government. Policy, budgets, training, negotiations and all other aspects of fire suppression, law enforcement, and public education would become part of his daily life in Wells through to 1998.

In 1998, acting Commissioner of DPS, Colonel Malcolm Dow, appointed John Dean to be Maine's Fire Marshal. The child of the insurance industry, the Maine State Fire Marshal's Office was an organization that investigated fires and regulated building construction in an effort to engineer into structures fire prevention and safety features. The office's role has grown to include other activities that were assigned to it with seeming disregard as to the organizations statutory mission. Managing by simply maintaining business as usual was not John Dean's style so when took over as Fire Marshal a new

management philosophy based on the idea of integrating various organizational activities into one continuum aimed at achieving broader objectives and goals ultimately became the management philosophy. Though still a work in progress, developing this continuum required reorganization and innovation.

Fire Marshal Dean has worked to eliminate the administrative impediment created over time due to the separation of the inspections and plans review division from investigations. In so doing, an investigation can now include an inspector. This joining of inspections and investigations focuses the investigation on origin and cause as well as potential failures in code enforcement and required engineered fire protection mitigation systems. Along the way the investigations division has received essential new equipment and upgrades of existing equipment ranging from protective face masks to response trailers and other tools used to assist and educate the larger law enforcement community on arson and fire issues in general. The inspections division has seen more routine incorporations of updated national codes and additional equipment they too have used to work with the public at large and the state's code enforcement community. Supporting and improving the merging of inspections and investigations required critical additions to operational activities and staff which Fire Marshal Dean did attain.

The first came in the form of updated data collection specifically focused on investigations, the new Bombs Arson Tracking System, and the renewal of Maine's Fire Incident Reporting System (MEFIRS). The MEFIRS system in particular has provided a basis for examining Maine's unique fire burden. Fire Marshal Dean was able to attain skilled staff for the collection of data as well as individuals capable of a more sophisticated level of statistical analysis than any other bureau in the Department of Public Safety. With that staff in place the data on Maine's fire experience is used in concert with BATS, data from external

organizations including Maine's CDC, Maine's Geographic Information Systems, U.S. Census Data, and others to drive policy development, code development and rulemaking, grant acquisition, and of course, legislative affairs. The acquisition of grant funding has grown significantly and become the basis for supporting the Fire Marshal's growing public education efforts. And in the area of legislative affairs, Fire Marshal Dean has always fought the hard fight with a sincere and heart felt interest in making Maine a safer place for our residents and the visiting public.

Fire Marshal John Dean has strongly pushed and obtained legislative support for reduced ignition propensity cigarettes, a prohibition on the sale of novelty lighters, and moved through appropriations for the creation of additional staff positions to reduce the backlog in inspections and investigations. In addition to these legislative accomplishments, Fire Marshal Dean had the Governor issue the first ever executive order to create a Juvenile Fire Safety Collaborative. Critical support and justification for each of these initiatives was supported by information that was gathered through the data collection and analysis capacities Fire Marshal Dean built. Naturally along the way, as is the case with anyone in the forefront of public policy issues, Fire Marshal Dean did not always get the legislation he wished to see become law passed. However, more often than those shortfalls, were the many occasions in which legislation that might have had a negative impact on public health and safety in Maine failed due to the Fire Marshal's opposition.

The list of Fire Marshal Dean's accomplishments, shortfalls, and compromise solutions in the public safety venue would be a long and complex story. Individuals who became adults during the sixties, and particularly those who served in Viet Nam, were forced to weigh and consider considerably complex and competing social and political ideas and come up with solutions and philosophical positions that would guide them through the rest of their career and lives. That experience served John Dean well.

CONSUMER FIREWORKS ARE LEGAL IN MAINE

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

One of the major changes underway at the Fire Marshal's Office is the implementation of Maine's law legalizing the sale, use, and possession of consumer fireworks. The office, under statute, must license the stores while the bulk of law enforcement pertaining to use and possession is the business of local officials.

To have a consumer fireworks retail sale facility licensed, the Fire Marshal's Office will look to see if the facility is in compliance with statute as well as relevant regulations.

Regulations can be broken down into two major areas of focus: the actual building/structure and the products/fireworks. Other than some statutory language and amendments required to resolve conflicts with the Maine Uniform Building Code, a consumer fireworks store in Maine must comply with the National Fire Protection Association's *Code for the Manufacture, Transportation, Storage, and Retail Sales of Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles*, 2006 edition. The products in those stores must meet the construction, packaging and labeling requirements set forth by the Consumer Products Safety Commission.

The easiest way to identify a consumer firework is to look for the code UN 0336 1.4g on the label of the product. However, not all consumer fireworks are legal in Maine. The law forbids the sale, use and possession of missile type rockets, helicopters and aerial spinners in addition to sky and bottle rockets. A precise definition of these prohibited devices can be found in Fire Marshal's Rule Chapter 36 on our web page. Below is a picture of a missile type rocket.



The identifying feature is the fins. Any rocket with fins is not legal in Maine.

Here you'll see a picture of a helicopter and aerial spinner. The identifying characteristic of the helicopter are its blades. Spinners are less obvious and may require observation during use.



Lastly, are the sky and bottle rockets. The identifying feature is the stick attached.



The rationale for prohibiting these devices is based on the fact that they can, and do indeed, take off in what is referred to as an "errant flight pattern" and hence can injure someone or start a fire.

Consumer fireworks are dangerous but if you follow the instructions carefully, particularly the distance requirements, you should be just fine. The Fire Marshal's Office has always believed it is best to leave fireworks to professionals but we also believe, and know, consumer fireworks can be used safely. Our job, in this first year of legalized consumer fireworks in Maine, is to license stores but also provide information to the public on consumer fireworks safety. Don't hesitate to call us with any questions you have and visit our web site "Consumer Fireworks in Maine" at the url below. Have a fun and safe summer!

<http://www.maine.gov/dps/fmo/fireworks/index.html>

MEFIRS – Maine Fire Incident Reporting System

	Current Statistics 2011*	Final Statistics for 2010
Total Calls:	63,232	74,840
Fire Calls:	2,668	3,439**
Rescue Calls:	41,315	49,754
All others:	19,249	25,647
Fire Departments Reporting	157	180
Total Fire Dollar Loss	\$26,084,018	\$27,511,716
Civilian Fire Related Injuries	49	37
Fire Service Fire Related Injuries	22	31
Civilian Fire Related Deaths	23***	9***
Fire Service Fire Related Deaths	0***	0***

* The Fire Marshal's Office will have all data for 2011 in by June-July of 2012.

** Represents single incidents only.

*** Based on SFMO Investigations.

Consumer Fireworks in Maine

Please remember to check the validity of your data and make corrections as needed prior to submitting the data to us!

Consumer fireworks are now legal. It is now time for Maine police and fire departments around the state to make the best of it and ensure that no one gets hurt. Law enforcement, regulatory, and public education efforts will only go so far. In order to target those efforts more efficiently, we're going to need to keep track of the number of fires caused by fireworks, the injuries, and the type of fireworks involved. CDC reports will provide us with information and the Maine Hospital Association and others will also be helping. In MEFIRS we'll be able to track fires resulting from fireworks as follows:

1. Basic Module: To collect information on all incidents.

a. Incident Type:

- i. 243 Fireworks explosion (no fire), included are all classes of fireworks.
- ii. Fires that occur as a result of fireworks should use incident types 100 series (fires) then the heat source should be documented.
- iii. Injuries that occur as a result of fireworks should use the incident types in the 300 series. Remember you will need to complete the EMS module.

2. Fire Module:

a. Heat source codes:

- i. 54 Fireworks. Included are sparklers, paper caps, party poppers, and firecrackers.
- ii. 50 Explosives. Fireworks, other

3. Wildland Fire Module:

a. Heat Source Codes

- i. 54 Fireworks. Included are sparklers, paper caps, party poppers, and firecrackers.
- ii. 50 Explosives. Fireworks, other

iii. Activity of Person involved:

21 Fireworks use

4. The Arson and EMS modules contain additional reporting options if needed.

For information on MEFIRS contact us at 626-3872. Thank you.

"Fight Fire with Facts"



Would you let your child play with fire?

Every year thousands of Americans, mostly children, are hurt by consumer fireworks such as sparklers and firecrackers. Many are burned, scarred or disfigured by fireworks that are legal, but still very dangerous and cause fires. This year, an alliance of health and safety advocates asks you to keep fireworks from hurting your family. The risk is too great.

Leave fireworks to the professionals.

National Fire Protection Association along with American Academy of Family Physicians • American Academy of Ophthalmology • American Academy of Pediatrics • American Association for Hand Surgery • American Association of Public Health Physicians • American Burn Association • American College of Emergency Physicians • American Society of Plastic Surgeons • Emergency Nurses Association • Fire Department Safety Officers Association • International Association of Arson Investigators • International Association of Fire Chiefs • International Association of Fire Fighters • International Fire Marshals Association • Metropolitan Fire Chiefs • National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners • National Association of School Nurses • National Association of State Fire Marshals • National Volunteer Fire Council • Prevent Blindness America

This is a great opportunity and we need to take advantage of it.

The Fire Prevention and Safety Grants (FP&S) are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), and are under the purview of the Grant Programs Directorate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FP&S Grants support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to target high-risk populations and reduce injury and prevent death. In 2005, Congress reauthorized funding for FP&S and expanded the eligible uses of funds to include Firefighter Safety Research and Development.

If you haven't already begun planning your grant now it is still not too late. Projects that target a specific population for door-to-door installation of smoke alarms along with home fire safety inspections will be given priority. The rationale being that in most cases people will survive a fire and escape injury if notified in time. The home safety inspections captures a variety of safety issues in the home ranging from the lack of smoke alarms to obstacles in the way of escape. Sprinkler awareness is also a high priority.

Programs that incorporate provisions for deaf/hard-of-hearing alarm installations as part of their comprehensive installation and education effort (hardwiring of deaf/hard-of-hearing smoke alarms) are also being encouraged.

If you choose to do a door-to-door smoke detector installation and home safety inspection be sure to use dual sensor long-life smoke detectors. The United States Fire Administration is really emphasizing the importance of not installing "just any" detector.

Be sure to describe your population in as detailed a fashion and possible breaking it down into percentages by age, housing stock, and other variables. For more information go to the link below:

<http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/fpsgrants/index.shtml>

FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANT APPLICATIONS TO OPEN APRIL 2ND

By Richard E. Taylor, Sr. Research and Planning Analyst

The Assistance to Firefighters Fire Prevention and Safety Grant applications will open up April 2nd and close the 27th. Over the last three years the State Fire Marshal's Office, Bates College, the Department of Conservation, Presque Isle and Camden Fire Departments have received funding for fire prevention projects.

NEED EQUIPMENT SUCH AS COMPUTERS?

By MESASP

If your department is in need of property, look no further than the Maine State Agency for Surplus Property (MESASP). MESASP is located at 85 Leighton Rd. in Augusta. The hours are 7:30 – 4:15 Monday – Friday and our phone number is 287-4586.

The MESASP has always been a great resource. Particularly during these trying economic times and when dollars need to be stretched more and more, we offer a practical and economical alternative to new purchases. We consistently have quality surplus property available to buy at a fraction of the cost of new.

MESASP receives surplus property from the state and federal government for distribution to a variety of organizations (donees), including fire departments. Federal property can be screened and allocated to our state. Recent federal items available for screening were air packs, new fire hose, hose reels, chemical masks, strap cutters, fire extinguishers, boats, a Humvee fire vehicle, mobile light towers, various tools and safety goggles. We always have office furniture available such as, desks, chairs, shelving and tables. If we don't have what you're looking for, please ask! We can put your request on a want list and screen for the item.

Pursuant to MRSA Title 5, fire depts. required to report to the State Fire Marshal can purchase a complete computer system for only \$35!!! If your fire dept. is funded by your municipality, then the municipality needs to submit an "Application for Eligibility" and include the fire department. Fire departments operating independently from municipalities submit their own application.

If your fire department or municipality is not currently registered with our agency, you can submit an "Application for Eligibility" in order to purchase surplus state and federal property. The application can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/bgs/centralserv/surplus/in dex.htm>.

Select the link to "Donee Eligibility Applications".

MESASP also conducts auctions each year and donees(you) are allowed to purchase auction property at a fixed priced prior to items being sold on the public auction dates. Dates for these events are posted on their website along with other information you may find useful. If you have a need to purchase auction property on an emergency basis, please contact us for requirements.

Stop in! You and your budget will be glad you did!

DWELLING FIRES DIP BELOW 1,000 IN 2010!

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

Data reported to the Fire Marshal's Office indicated that the number of fires in one-and-two family dwellings was 875. The first time it has dipped below 1,000 in several years.

Because most fatalities and injuries to civilians and firefighters alike occur in dwellings, this low number is an excellent indicator. Many of you will recall that in 2010 we only had nine fire deaths. The fewest fire deaths we've ever seen! These significantly lower numbers of fires in such dwellings were unfortunately offset by a slight increase in apartment fires and steady numbers in the other occupancies which together comprise all residential property types.

Property Type	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Dwellings	1144	1035	1059	1062	1120	875
Apartments	370	447	366	355	386	363
Mobile Homes	27	19	27	17	19	14
Hotels, Motels	46	44	30	40	27	32
Other Residential	70	103	92	84	82	78
Total Residential	1657	1648	1574	1558	1634	1362



<http://www.smokefreeforme.org/>

WHEN MUST I CALL FOR A FIRE INVESTIGATOR- FACTS AND FICTION

By Sgt. Kenneth Grimes CFI, CFEI, Fire Investigations Supervisor

I can see it now, “Another response pep talk from the Fire Marshals Office”. I understand that thought, but because operating policies change almost as fast as some fire chiefs in small towns do, it doesn’t hurt to get everyone back on the same page with facts, not fiction or myth.

I mostly wanted to write about the more unusual or obscure questions about responses I have gotten over the years. We all understand that if you have a deceased victim, give us a call. I haven’t met a fire chief yet who wants to deal with that fire scene alone, but questions do still arise in other areas, for example; what constitutes a serious personal injury? Do I have to call for a fire in a school? What is the monetary loss threshold for calling? Do I have to leave someone here at the scene if you’re not coming until tomorrow? Why do I have to have a truck stand by while you’re on your way? All legitimate questions, I’ll try to answer them as simply as possible.

By state law, if you believe a fire is intentionally set, you must call us. After kicking it around on the phone, it may be decided that the best course of action may be to handle it locally, but the call still must be made. The mandatory calling also extends to schools, churches, medical facilities, boarding homes, nursing homes, etc. no matter how small the fire event was. The reasoning is that we have a regulatory responsibility to these facilities and a fire event may cause an inspection of that facility.

A fire in a school is of particular interest to us. A small trash can fire in the bathroom may not cause great damage but needs a full investigation. Someone is responsible for it and that someone is still in the school with hundreds of other students. I know schools may be reluctant to have the word get out, but it’s still better than a second, more devastating fire.

What constitutes a serious personal injury? To try to get a bright line that everyone can work with, if the victim goes in an ambulance from the scene, or goes to the hospital by private car, call us. Serious personal injury fires, along with fatal fires get an immediate response. This applies to your fire fighters on scene.

At what monetary loss do I have to call? There is no limit, high or low, where we have to get involved or don’t have to get involved.

When you need our assistance with a fire scene, we all know to call the local state regional communications center. A supervisor will call you back and ask for some specifics about the scene you are working. This helps us determine the type of response we will provide to you. For example: does this scene require one or two investigators, are other agencies needed, is this an immediate response or a next business day response. Look at it as a neighboring town asking you for mutual aid, you will send the needed resources, but only after getting some feedback from the requesting agency on what they have for an incident.

As far as scene security goes, if we are coming right out, a truck needs to be on scene to “hold the scene” for us. This goes to the legal authority for us as law enforcement fire investigators to enter a person’s private property to conduct a search. Courts have ruled that our investigation is an extension of the fire departments entry authority in the interest of public safety. If your department leaves the scene before we arrive, a warrant or consent is necessary to enter. If it is determined that we will examine the scene the next business day, no scene security is needed by your department except for some scene tape if you have it.

I hope this has helped reinforce some facts about your responsibilities as the municipal fire official and dispelled some of the fiction or myths.

Keep your people safe.

MAINE FIREWATCH

By Richard E. Taylor, Senior Research and Planning Analyst

A very young child is believed to have accidentally started this fire in Richmond below. Over the past couple months a number of fires believed to have been started by children have been reported.



Richmond Home Fire

Not all these other fires in which children were involved in the ignition of the fire are believed to be accidental. The Fire Marshal's Office is investigating these.

Check out this hot snowmobile below. The operator of the snowmobile had put gas in it and when he attempted to start it up the fire ignited. The owner of the station was out of business until the suppression system on the pump could be recharged.



Monmouth Snowmobile Fire

Below is all that is left of an abandoned farm house scheduled to be demolished. Fire personnel from W. Gardiner, Farmingdale, Litchfield, and Gardiner worked for three hours to extinguish the blaze.



Perhaps no fire demonstrates the cost of fire and value of fire codes more than the one that took place recently in Ft. Kent. The fire, pictured below,



Ft. Kent Fire

leveled several buildings destroying or damaging businesses and seven apartments displacing eleven tenants. Were these structures built



A toilet paper roll was set on fire in the girl's bathroom at Vassalboro Community School. Fires in schools occur most frequently in bathrooms. This fire required the evacuation of 500 students out into the cold November air.

today, sprinkler systems and required structural separation would have limited this fire considerably. The savings from such fire protection systems clearly would outweigh the cost we see in this fire. When you consider the fire department response, jobs lost and costs to displaced tenants it all runs into over a million dollars. This cost exceeds that of the mitigation systems that would have stopped the fire. In addition, some of the buildings were considered historic and irreplaceable. The cause of the fire has not been determined. Luckily no one was hurt or killed.

This Month in Fire History

Lakeview Grammar School fire kills 175, Collinwood (OH), 1908

Castle Gate #2 coal mine fire kills 171, Castle Gate (UT), 1924

Royal Beach home hotel fire kills 19, Chicago (IL), 1981

First fire prevention legislation passed, Cambridge (MA), 1631

Insurance groups form committee to design what will be NFPA, New York (NY), 1896

Triangle Shirtwaist fire kills 145, New York, 1911

Bangor, ME Flood, Mar 1902

PENOBCOT FLOOD CITY OF BANGOR

THREATENED WITH INUNDATION. (sic)

Bangor, Maine, March 20.---The flood disaster which has long been feared on the Penobscot, came late tonight, when a great mass of ice and logs swept down against the Maine Central railway bridge, carrying out its middle pier and letting two spans into the river. The mass swept on against the wooden toll bridge, carrying away the middle span. Basements of stores in the business section where goods worth thousands of dollars are kept are filling with water. There is a stretch of solid and broken ice below the city extending six miles to Hampden. Should it hold where it is and the upper jam come down upon it, fully half of Bangor's business area would be under water. *Grand Forks Daily Herald, Grand Forks, ND 21 Mar 1902*

UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Maine Fire Protection Services Commission



**9th Annual Blaine House Symposium
For First Responders at Point
Lookout Resort & Conference Center,
Northport, Maine - Thurs. & Fri.,
April 12 & 13, 2012**

For more information go to:
<http://www.mainechiefs.com/>

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Leadership so Everyone Goes Home Training Program



Thursday, June 28, 2012
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Thornton Academy
438 Main St. Saco, ME

\$12 per person to cover lunch
Registration Deadline ~ June 15, 2012



Any questions, please contact: John Duross at 207-229-8329 or e-mail at jduross@sacomaine.org
Or Prudie Duross at 207-229-5067 or e-mail at prufirephotos@yahoo.com

If you have an announcement or upcoming event you'd like to post in this newsletter please feel free to forward it to us using the contact information below. The next issue will be in September 2011.



The ***Maine Fire Marshal News*** is an electronic publication of the Maine State Fire Marshal's Office.

Editors: Richard E. Taylor & Lori L. Gunn

To submit articles for publication contact the Fire Marshal's Office at (207) 626-3870 and ask to speak with the editors. You may also e-mail an article or comment to Richard.e.taylor@maine.gov

Articles submitted for publication in this newsletter from outside sources do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the State Fire Marshal's Office.

All articles are subject to an editorial staff review prior to inclusion. For a copy of submission requirements contact the editorial staff.

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